

right where you left it

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right where you left it

by [hoorayy](#)

Summary

Tommy was wearing his favorite shirt the night that everything happened, and for some reason, *that's* what he's most upset about now. There's a list of things that should bother him more. So why's he stuck on this?

(MAJOR SPOILERS FOR DEVIL TOWN. read that first!)

Notes

slides in six months later with an iced latte. hey there devil town enjoyers how y'all doing this oneshot has been in my wips folder literally since, like, the day after i finished dt so i'm quite happy it's finally done! enjoy a little bit of healing arc comfort - dt!crimeboys enjoyers, this one's for you.

(this is a sequel to devil town - if you haven't read that before, DEFINITELY go do that first. this has every spoiler imaginable in it. you already saw a spoiler just getting here. go read the first part in this series! go!)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Tommy was wearing his favorite shirt when he got—when—well. When everything happened.

The funniest part is it wasn't even his shirt. It's Wilbur's, years old, featuring the logo of some miserable band that he'd been into when he was sixteen, and when he'd been packing for college, he nearly threw it out, so Tommy took it. It's a little too big on him, baggy because Wilbur's always been fuckin' tall, and Tommy still hasn't caught up, even four years later. It's too big and too worn and too personal to wear other than pajamas, so that's the only time Tommy wears it.

Or it *was* the only time he wore it. Because it's gone now, covered in blood and then cut off him in the hospital, and it's nothing but shredded fabric and bloodstains in the garbage.

And he shouldn't be this upset about it. He shouldn't really be upset about it *at all*, because Tommy got kidnapped and almost died after spending two weeks caught in some sort of fucked up mine monster hell dimension - *just* two weeks apparently; he keeps checking the calendar and adding up the days, because that doesn't sound right at all, but apparently it is - and now that he's out of it, his family's gone all weird in his absence, what with two extra people being in it. One of them is his brother, and one of them is some guy Tommy's literally never seen in his life, and for some reason, it's *Ranboo* who's easier to get used to.

Those are all the things that Tommy should be more upset about than the t-shirt he doesn't have anymore.

But it was his favorite shirt. It used to be Wilbur's. He doesn't have it anymore.

Another thing Tommy should be more upset about than a t-shirt: he can't open his eyes outside anymore.

In the hospital, the lights in his room had been kept dim, and turned off entirely whenever he could convince someone to flip the switch entirely. It was a little easier to keep his eyes open that way. It'll take a bit before he re-adjusts to light, and to being able to see, after weeks in total darkness. His eyes just need some time to recover.

So he can't see sunlight. When he steps outside the hospital for the first time, Techno on one side and Wilbur on the other like twin bodyguards, he wants to cry. He feels a breeze on his face and on his arms; he feels the bite of mid-October chill against his skin. His eyes immediately water up, and he can't open them for how bad they sting.

It's not even sunny today. It's grey and overcast and it might rain, but Tommy can't look at the sky and figure it out. He just sticks his arm over his eyes and blinks back tears and tries to keep himself from sobbing here in this parking lot.

It—It sucks, first of all. He's finally somewhere that isn't dark, isn't suffocating, doesn't feel like everything is caving in around him and gradually drowning him in something he can't even touch. It's open, it's a fresh breeze of air on his face when he steps outside of the hospital doors with Wilbur's hand on his back keeping him steady, and he wants to sob because it's finally bright and it fucking hurts.

This is what he's been looking forward to. He'd spent—it was weeks stuck in that mine, or whatever the place deeper than the mines had been, and it had felt like a whole lot longer. It had felt like forever, that he'd been down there hopelessly begging for one last chance to see the sun. One last taste of fresh air, an open sky above him, one more moment to at least say goodbye and appreciate the world in a way he'd never known to.

And now he's got it, and he can't even open his eyes.

“You okay, Tommy?” Phil’s voice. They all keep using his name in sentences more than they used to, more than they’d have to. Like they’re getting used to saying his name again. Tommy won’t complain; it’s nice to hear someone talk to him, even when noise just the slightest bit too loud makes his ears ring and his head spin. He’s starting to realize that all of him is having the same problem. Anything brighter, louder, any more intense than *total empty darkness* is enough to hurt.

“Fucking bright,” Tommy says, a grumble. He tries to move his arm and blink his eyes open. It hurts. There are tears stinging in them, from the sun, from disuse and strain, from the fact that he’s finally outside and he can’t even fucking enjoy it. He covers his face again. “Somebody tell the sun to fuck off for a bit.”

“Aw, Tommy,” Wilbur says, genuinely sad, and then one hand comes to rest gently on Tommy’s back. The concern makes Tommy uneasy, and so does the feather-light pressure between his shoulder-blades. It sits the wrong way between his ribs. Everything sits wrong in there now. Something’s been scraped out of his chest and it makes everything that goes in curl uncomfortably without a place to rest the way it should. Is it that he’s just not used to Wilbur being close enough to touch, that he’s been wishing for him for so long that now that he’s here, it feels off? Or is that there’s something worse still curled up in some empty spot in his lungs?

“I’ll just pull the car around,” Phil says. “You stay here, Tommy. Don’t worry about it.”

“You need sunglasses,” Tubbo suggests. “Until your eyes are more used to light.”

Tommy wants to cry. He wants to move his arm and be able to stand outside and take a deep breath and feel the breeze on his face and look around and - and see all the *colors*, see everything he’s missed. He wants to know that this is truly real. He wants to *see*. This sucks.

“This sucks,” he says aloud. He sounds as miserable as he feels. Wilbur’s arm around him tightens.

“You’ll be okay,” Wil promises. “We’ll get home and you can just sit inside where it’s darker until you feel a little better.”

He doesn't want to be inside or in the dark anymore. He's tired of that. None of them get it, he doesn't think. That it had been two weeks for *them*, two physical weeks but something far, far longer to him. That he's been stuck in some sort of state where he can't see anything but darkness that looks the same with eyes open or shut, can't really move, can barely even breathe because he doesn't know if he needs to anymore, if he's already dead and gone and this is how it'll be forever—

Was. That's how it *was*. He's not there now, he reminds himself. Wilbur's hand still rests on his back, the distant sound of a car starting reaches his ears, the faintest breeze plays on his arms. He's here. He fills his lungs so full of cold air that they might burst, and he breathes out the feeling of being alive.

He is here, even if he can't see it.

He makes Wilbur carry him inside when they get home, and he hides his face in Wilbur's shoulder so he doesn't have to see the sun.

A second thing that's weird and wrong and more important than a shirt Tommy doesn't have anymore: Ranboo.

He meets him in the hospital, when they're both still recovering and the two of them have plenty of time to kill. He teaches Ranboo to play Go Fish, because the weirdo somehow doesn't know how to play. He asks how the fuck you get to be seventeen years old and not know how to play Go Fish, and Ranboo says, "I'm homeschooled."

Tommy doesn't know enough about homeschooling to refute this, but he *does* think it's a weird excuse.

There are fading red scars all over the lower half of Ranboo's face, under his jaw and down his neck too. They're the same kind of branching, sprawling lines that cover Tommy's chest just above his heart. They're the same as the ones on Techno's arms, and the ones all over Karl. (Tommy has only seen Karl once so far. He's not been awake much, and he's so confused that it's hard to be in the same room as him. Tommy doesn't know him well enough to sit through it, so he leaves Sapnap and Quackity with him, and he goes back to trying to understand who the hell Ranboo is.)

"Let's play a game," Tommy says as he draws a card from the deck in front of him.

"I thought we were playing a game."

“Obviously we are. Let’s play a second game,” Tommy says. “Every time you have to go fish, I get to ask you a question and you have to answer it.”

“Uh,” Ranboo says, sounding confused. “Okay? What happens if you have to draw?”

“Nothing,” Tommy says. “This game is about you.”

“That seems unfair.”

“Life is that way. Ask me for a card.”

Ranboo studies his hand. “Do you have any sevens?”

“Go fish,” Tommy says. Ranboo reaches for the deck. “How did you meet Tubbo?”

“McDonalds,” Ranboo says. “I was getting food and he was there at the same time, and we started talking, and then we decided to hang out.”

Tommy scoffs. “Really?”

“Yeah. We got pizza the next day and ate it at the playground. I still remember it. It’s your turn to ask for a card, isn’t it?”

Tubbo had invited *Ranboo* to the playground with him? Tommy frowns at his cards. “Give me your threes.”

“I don’t have any,” Ranboo says. “Go fish.”

Tommy swipes up a card from the draw pile. Ranboo asks for a two, and Tommy debates lying about it, but eventually hands it over. When he finally draws again, Tommy asks, “How’d you get shot?”

Ranboo’s hands go still. He says, “I don’t remember.”

“Really?”

“I have a bad memory.” Nervous fingers flicking through his cards, rearranging his hand. “Do you have a Queen?”

“It’s not your turn.” Studies his own cards. “Do you have a Queen?”

With a sigh, Ranboo hands him the card. “That feels unfair.”

“Not my fault you forgot the turn order, boob boy,” Tommy says. “You know the playground was me and Tubbo’s thing first.”

“He told me. You met there, right?”

“When we were seven,” Tommy says. “Ten years ago. *Ten*. A decade. That’s a very long time, Ranboo.”

“Okay,” Ranboo says, mildly.

Tommy’s not jealous. He isn’t. If Tubbo went and made a new best friend while Tommy was stuck in hell, then, fine. Whatever. Tubbo can do what he wants, and besides, *Ranboo* is the one out of place here. Not Tommy. Tommy fits into his family perfectly fine and he’s not even *slightly* out of place.

Ranboo asks for a two again. He draws again.

“How much are you lying about?”

Ranboo’s hands go still again. The nervous flicking stops. “I don’t like this game anymore.”

“Answer the question.” Tommy leans back against his bed. “You’re not very good at lying, you know? You remember more than you’re saying, don’t you?”

Ranboo breathes out. “You’re incredibly rude to people you’ve only just met, you know?”

“I’m a goddamn delight,” Tommy says, “And fuck you. Answer the question.”

Ranboo says, “I *do* have a bad memory. I think it’s... from the whole...” He gestures at his face, the scars covering it. “Don’t really remember how I got them. Don’t remember how I got out. Don’t remember why I went back.”

Tommy wonders what that would be like. To be able to forget the details. If he could’ve woken up with a two week gap in his head, and not the sharpest clarity—gaping darkness, and blood on his favorite shirt, and a knife in Techno’s hand—

“Do you have an eight?” he asks, rushing it out.

“Go fish.”

He reaches for the deck. Ranboo says, “I didn’t even mean to be here, you know? I feel like I’m just floating from one place to the next. Letting people decide where I’m gonna go after this, just—whoever looks at me and tells me what to do. I don’t know where I’m gonna stop.”

Tommy doesn’t say anything to that.

“I know that doesn’t make sense,” Ranboo says, quietly. “I’m not trying to lie. I just... I want it to make sense to me first, I guess. And then I can explain to everyone else too.”

“You really don’t ever make sense.”

Ranboo laughs, quiet. “Yeah. I know. Do you have a four?”

Tommy's family is different than he remembers, and he can't figure out if it's because of him, or if they've really changed.

Wilbur is home, which is strange on its own, but even stranger is that everyone acts like it's normal for him to be here. Techno sits beside him at the breakfast table, and he hands Wilbur the salt shaker before Wilbur gets the words out to ask for it. Last night, they'd watched a movie, and when Tubbo inevitably fell asleep halfway through, it was on Wilbur's shoulder. *Wilbur's*. Not Tommy's shoulder, and not even Techno's, but Wilbur's, for some fucking reason.

Like Wilbur being here is so normal, it doesn't even bother any of them anymore.

And he should be glad about it, he thinks. All the buzz and the noise of other people should settle into him like relief and comfort and the familiarity of finally being home. Wilbur is here across the breakfast table, Tommy is here, and that should be enough for him now. Their family is slotting back together in pieces that were always meant to fit, damaged and crumpled up as they are; they are different pieces but they are still the same puzzle, and something about it is wrong.

Something has changed. It's an uncomfortable empty ache in Tommy's chest.

He thinks maybe it's him who's changed.

“Do you ever wonder if that really happened?”

It's dark outside, and the only light on is the one above the kitchen table. Tommy sits at it, a warm mug between his fingers. Techno stands at the counter stirring another. He doesn't look back at Tommy, and he doesn't stop stirring.

“It did,” Techno says. He sounds like he doesn't want to say anything else about it. This, at least, is normal for Techno. This is something that hasn't changed.

“I know.” Tommy tries again. “I mean... It feels like maybe I imagined it. Or maybe this is the part that didn't really happen.”

“This is real,” Techno says. He sits down at the table. The legs of his chair scrape across the floor. “You're real.”

“I know,” Tommy echoes. He thinks it's true, usually. “I just forget, sometimes. If it's a little too dark, if—if—I'm just laying there and I think, maybe I never left. Maybe this is all another dream.”

The smell of chocolate, rich and warm, fills the kitchen, right beside the heavy silence as Tommy's older brother doesn't quite meet his eyes. Techno looks down, and the steam from his mug fogs his glasses so Tommy can't even see through them. Can't see the dark lines he

knows are etched below his eyes, that haven't faded even slightly since Tommy's been home. Can't see the way Techno is always avoiding making eye contact and the pang of *something* Tommy can never quite read.

"How much do you remember?" Techno asks. His voice is flat.

"All of it," Tommy says. He is the only one who remembers, between him and Ranboo and Karl. He's the only one who can recall every last moment. Part of him envies them for forgetting, which he thinks is a terrible thing to do. Karl couldn't remember his own name when he woke up. Ranboo still doesn't know where he came from. Tommy shouldn't be *jealous* of that.

But there are nights that he is anyway. This is one of them.

Techno's knuckles go tight around his mug. "Right."

He isn't sure what else to say. Apologize, maybe. *Sorry, Techno, that I remember every second of you stabbing me in the heart. Sorry I didn't forget it like we both would rather.*

But Tommy says nothing, and Techno says nothing, and they both sit in the dark kitchen while their hot chocolate goes cold and neither of them say a word.

Here's the thing about the shirt Tommy doesn't have anymore: he doesn't actually care about the shirt at all.

It was a stupid band. He listened to them back when Wilbur was still home, because he'd like to sit on Wil's floor and listen to his music and pick out songs for Wilbur to learn the chords for on his guitar. He memorized a few of the songs to sing along with him. But the band was dumb, and they sounded better on Wilbur's guitar than they did on their own records.

The t-shirt was too big for him. Even as he got taller, it never did hang right, and it always made him feel like he was drowning in the fabric.

It stopped reminding him of Wilbur about a year into owning it. It used to smell like Wilbur, back when his cologne and shampoo still had a distinct scent that lingered in their house. That disappeared pretty quickly. It wasn't Wilbur's shirt anymore; it was just a piece of fabric. Wilbur was going to throw it out anyway. All Tommy did was delay the process by a few years.

So losing it shouldn't bother him. Even if it was something he could hold, years after his brother was gone, something he could dig his fingers into when Wilbur didn't pick up a call or didn't answer a text for weeks. The shirt's just a memento of when Tommy turned on shitty music and got out a cheap guitar and tried to stretch his fingers across frets the same way Wilbur used to—back when he was a little more of a fool, to think it'd make Wilbur closer, somehow.

Wilbur's here now. He has *his brother*. He doesn't need the reminder of him anymore. He's got the real thing now; not the facsimile of closeness that the shirt, sort of, somehow, in a dumb kinda way, had been.

It's just a shirt. It always was.

Another thing more important than a shirt: they're leaving next week.

It's a fucking relief, honestly, when Phil turns around a laptop screen to show them all pictures of a house far, far away from here. They get to go look at it first, a day trip spent driving out to the city and looking at that house and a second one too, but they're all pretty sold on the first. Phil's talking to the agent about putting in an offer on the way home.

It's bigger, which is good, because Ranboo has been sleeping on the couch. He can't manage the stairs too well now, which is his current excuse. There's only so many bedrooms in their old house, though, and Tubbo and Tommy already share one of them.

There's a yard at the new house, but a smaller one than what they've got here. Which makes sense, because it's in the city, and it's kind of a benefit too because there's not enough trees to make Tommy feel nervous. Just two - a pretty one up in front of the house, and a big one in the back that he wants to climb as soon as he feels a little less like the sunlight itself could kill him or send him into a fucking panic attack. It's been a week out of the hospital, and he's already doing a bit better. With a pair of sunglasses, he can stand outside just fine, as long as the street isn't too busy, and the wind isn't too loud, and someone else is standing beside him, which they always are. Somebody's always in arm's reach of Tommy these days. It'll get old someday, he imagines. But it hasn't gotten there yet.

So they're moving. As soon as the offer goes through, they're moving, because none of them want to stay here a second longer than they have to.

“This sweater, keep or toss?”

Tommy cranes his neck to look upside-down at Wilbur, who is sitting cross-legged on the floor and holding up a blue sweater Tommy hasn't worn in a year. On either side of him are boxes, waiting to be put in a moving truck or donated to a thrift shop.

“I forgot I still had that,” Tommy says. “Keep.”

Wilbur folds the sweater and puts it into one of the boxes, and then he turns back to the open closet and pulls out the next thing. “You know, this'd be a bit faster if you wanted to actually

help.”

Tommy doesn’t move from his spot on Tubbo’s bed, flat on his back and half hanging off the side. “I’m good, thanks.”

Wilbur rolls his eyes, but he just holds up a pair of lace-up sneakers with grass stains. “I’m tossing these.”

“What? No!” Tommy throws his arms out, reaching for the shoes at the same time that Wilbur moves them further out of reach. “I like those, they still fit!”

“They’re falling apart at the seams,” Wilbur says. “They fit because you’ve stretched them out so far they’re unrecognizable.”

Tommy gives him the pleading eyes. He knows it’s going to work, and it does. “*Wil*. I like them.”

Wilbur holds out for one moment longer, and then shakes his head and puts the shoes in the box in front of him. “All right, fine. I dunno how you still wear them, I could swear you had these even before I left.”

It’s a joke. Wilbur says it easily, like it slips off his tongue without a second thought, and then it’s there. The acknowledgment falls out of his mouth and then lands big and heavy and ugly. It sits on the shitty old carpet in between them, and neither of them can ignore it, but neither of them can say anything about it.

It’s the first time he’s said it so plainly. The clear acknowledgement that this is not how things have always been; that Wilbur is back, and he was not always here, and he left, once, and he never explained why. He’s come back and he’s fit right back in, and nobody says a word about it.

Well, fuck this. Tommy’s tired of dancing around it like it’s not happening.

“Why’d you come back?”

Which is — that’s not the question he meant to ask, is the thing. He watches the way Wilbur flinches, and he wonders if he catches what Tommy is trying to say, what Tommy can’t quite get into words.

“You were gone, Tommy,” Wilbur says, carefully, like he’s picking his words out of a massive bowl with slippery fingers. “Of course I’d come back.”

“Okay,” Tommy says, and he shouldn’t say the next part, but it’s been three years since Wilbur has been back and *longer* since he last sat beside him on the floor of his room, and everyone’s just acting like everything’s fixed while Tommy hasn’t learned a fucking thing. It’s been years and he blurts it out before he can think better, “Why couldn’t you have come back because I was here?”

He doesn’t really mean it, but he also does. Wilbur sits there with a stricken look on his face. And as much as Tommy wants to rush to apologize, swear he doesn’t mean it like that, assure

Wilbur he's just glad he's back *now*, he doesn't. He just sits there, and Wilbur just sits there, and neither of them know what to say.

"Sorry," Tommy says, finally.

"I'm sorry," Wilbur says, instead of anything else. "No, no, you're right. I'm sorry. There was—it was a lot, Tommy, there was a lot happening that you—I shouldn't have just left like that. I'm sorry."

"I knew you wouldn't come back," Tommy says. "I'm not stupid. I knew you always changed your plans at the last minute. It was dumb of me to keep hoping maybe you'd follow through on one of them, right?"

Wilbur says, "It wasn't dumb. I shouldn't have lied to you."

"I just wanted to believe you sometimes," Tommy says. "Like, I knew it was stupid, but I'd call you and imagine you'd pick up the phone. Or we'd make plans and I'd mark it on my calendar and let myself think that you might actually show up."

"Tommy—"

"There's shit I missed," Tommy says, "Clearly, because you're back now and everybody's just seemed to accept that. There's something I fucking missed, apparently."

Silence settles after that. He waits, to see if he'll answer, if he'll explain. If this is the moment it all clicks into place. But what Wilbur says, quietly, is, "Techno says you learned guitar."

Tommy's heart pauses in his chest. Wilbur's looking down at the box in front of him, not back at him, like he's looking anywhere else while Tommy can't fucking look away.

"That was meant to be a surprise." He's trying to quell the disappointed panic in his chest - because it's dumb, isn't it? He knew he was never going to surprise Wilbur. He was never going to get the chance, even before he got fucking kidnapped and sacrificed to a fucking mine monster. He was a lot younger and a lot dumber a month ago, wearing an old band t-shirt and imagining his brother was gonna come home and sit here and listen to Tommy play guitar. Maybe Wilbur even would've clapped.

(He's still picturing it. Has he gotten any wiser?)

"I know," Wilbur says. He's still looking down. "Techno told me. I—I was looking in your room, which maybe I shouldn't have been, but I found the guitar and I was playing it and—fuck, Tommy, I thought I'd never get to hear you play it."

Wilbur's voice *breaks* when he says it, and Tommy can't breathe. It's that awful fucking thing, the one where everyone else is grieving something that Tommy wasn't here for. The one that makes him feel like he's watching his own funeral.

Tommy says with a lump in his throat, "Well now you're never gonna. Techno ruined my surprise. Fuck you."

That startles a laugh out of Wilbur, shocked and wet - fuck, he wipes a hand across his face and *fuck* now Tommy's throat feels tighter and his eyes are stinging - "Oh my god. God, that's—that's so mean, Tommy. It was my one wish."

"Too bad," Tommy says. He repeats, because he doesn't want to cry, "Fuck you."

Wilbur pulls his glasses off and wipes at his eyes again, but his voice is steadier now. "Good to know you haven't changed a bit."

"Some of us haven't," Tommy lies, or maybe it's the truth, or maybe it's both. "I'm exactly the same. If anything I've just gotten *more* of me. Cooler, better, stronger, a bigger man than ever."

"Okay," Wilbur says. He laughs a little again. "Okay, Tommy."

"Why'd you leave?" Tommy asks for the first time. Or maybe he's asking for the hundredth time. He's not sure which. "I know you left for a reason. I know everybody else knows now, because everyone acts like you've always been here and it's just me who keeps tripping over it. I'm missing something, right? Why'd you leave?"

Wilbur looks up now. He looks right at Tommy, and he says, "Do you really want to know?"

"I wouldn't have asked if I didn't, dumbass."

And there's no calm before the storm; there's no silence to shatter and no moment of pause as if Wilbur is letting Tommy prepare. He just says it, with no preamble or build-up, as casually as if he were telling Tommy what he ate for dinner last night.

"I killed Tubbo's dad," Wilbur says. "I shot him. He didn't actually kill himself. That was a lie Quackity and I made up."

Oh.

So this is how Tommy finds out. Laying upside down on Tubbo's bed, while Wilbur sits cross-legged on the carpet with Tommy's closet spilling out around him.

"Oh," Tommy says. "When he tried to—"

"Yeah." Wilbur turns to the side. He pulls a sweater out of the closet, as if he hadn't just told Tommy the most awful secret of his life. As if this is just a normal thing for them now. "Keep or donate?"

"Keep," Tommy says. "Why didn't you tell anyone?"

Wilbur's hands still as he folds the sweater, halfway between the box and his own lap. "I didn't know how. You try confessing to your family that you murdered someone, and then that someone's kid moves into your house and you have to look at him every day."

"Oh," Tommy says again. "That wasn't murder, Wil. He was gonna kill you. Unless you made that part of the story up too."

“No,” Wilbur says. “No, that happened.”

“Yeah,” Tommy says. “Then it’s not murder. Self-defense. You didn’t have to lie about it.”

Wilbur drops the sweater. “Yeah. I dunno. I got scared, Tommy. I *killed someone*, Tommy. I —“

He cuts himself off, and the silence between them goes thick and heavy. Or maybe Tommy just now notices how heavy it’s gotten. He waits, waits and waits for Wilbur to speak again.

“Sorry,” Wilbur says, hoarse. “I think I probably shouldn’t have told you that.”

“Why?”

“It’s—” Wilbur struggles with words for a moment, mouth working open and shut. “It’s a *lot*, Tommy. That’s—Jesus, you’re seventeen, Tommy. You’re a kid. I don’t need to be dropping shit like that on you.”

“I don’t think that counts for us anymore, Wil.” Tommy does the math in his head. “You were seventeen when it happened. I’ve seen worse by now, y’know?”

Wilbur looks at him, with something like horror in his eyes. “I—oh.”

“I asked,” Tommy says, and as much as it’s an ache and an emptiness in him, it’s a little of falling into place too. “I asked. I wanted to know.”

“I wish I had a different answer,” Wilbur admits. “I wish it was something easier. I wish—”

He doesn’t finish the last one. Tommy sits up. He gets off Tubbo’s bed, kicks a box aside, and sits down on the floor at Wilbur’s side. He says, “I missed you.”

And Wilbur says, with a voice aching of honesty, “Jesus, Tommy, I missed you *so much*.”

“I’m still pissed at you,” Tommy says, with an ache in his throat. “Like, to be perfectly clear—you are still a total dickhead for all the times you said you were coming home and you didn’t. I’m not even mad that you left, I get it. But I am mad about that.”

“You have every right to be,” Wilbur says. “I should’ve—”

“Shut up,” Tommy interrupts, and he latches his arms around his brother. Wilbur goes still, one long second and then another, and then, gently, like he’s afraid it’ll break, he returns the hug. “Just shut up now.”

A quiet laugh. “Okay. Shutting up.”

Tommy doesn’t have words left. Neither does Wilbur, apparently, because he doesn’t say anything for a long time. He just sits on Tommy’s bedroom floor and hugs him, and it’s everything Tommy’s wanted for years.

“I’ll play guitar for you someday,” Tommy says, and Wilbur laughs again. “I didn’t really mean that.”

“Okay.” Wilbur’s voice sounds teary, but he’s smiling through it. “We can play a duet?”

“Okay,” Tommy agrees, with something warm in the empty space in his chest. “That sounds good. Yeah.”

(He still feels a little like there’s something all scraped out of him. There’s a t-shirt stained and shredded and totally gone. He’s gonna rebuild it, though. Theseus’ bloodied shirt, sewn back together piece by piece. Moment by moment.)

He tells Wilbur about the t-shirt the night before they move.

Everyone sleeps in the living room - all six of them, even Phil, like one big slumber party. Tubbo’s got his head on Tommy’s chest, snoring softly, and Tommy’s curled against Wilbur’s side, close enough to hear the way he breathes. Quiet, but not quite asleep yet.

“Wil,” he whispers. In the dim light, he sees Wilbur’s eyes move. “You know I kept your shirt?”

Wilbur whispers back, “What?”

“You were gonna throw it away when you left. I kept it. The one I was wearing when—you know.”

“Oh,” Wilbur says.

“It was my favorite shirt. I never even wore it out of the house, because it just—it felt like something I had to keep for myself. I didn’t even want other people to see it.”

“Oh,” Wilbur says again, sadder this time.

“It’s thrown away now, I guess,” Tommy says, “because there’s no way it survived all of that. But it was my favorite shirt. I keep thinking about it. Isn’t that dumb?”

“I don’t think it is. I can buy you another one,” Wilbur says, soft. “If it meant that much to you.”

“No. I just wanted you to know. I mean...” There’s a whole list of things more important to Tommy than a shirt he doesn’t have anymore. He closes his eyes. A shirt is just a shirt, and a list is just that too. Tommy’s brother is here beside him.

Tommy whispers, “It’s not about the shirt, Wil.”

End Notes

it's become just about impossible for me to answer every comment on devil town (i still reply to some every now and then, but the sheer volume means i can't guarantee an answer anymore) so i just want to leave this little message to say thank you to everyone who has read and loved that fic so much that you decided to take the time to let me know how much it meant to you. it's crazy to me that almost six months after finishing the story, people are still finding and reading it. so, here's my big reply to all those comments, and to every future comment too. thank you. <3

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!